

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 OMB-01 /080 W
-----040008 020237Z /14

O 020228Z AUG 78

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2741
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: CONTACT GROUP MEETING AUGUST 1

1. A MEETING OF THE CONTACT GROUP PM AUGUST 1 PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON TWO PRIMARY TOPICS: THE QUESTION OF THE ROLE OF THE FIVE PRIOR TO AND DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD; AND THE ADVISABILITY OF APPROACHES TO SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO URGING VERBAL AND MILITARY RESTRAINT AND SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON A NUMBER OF INACCURATE STATEMENTS MADE RECENTLY BY BOTH PARTIES. (OUR CONCERNS MIGHT ALSO BE EXPRESSED TO THE FRONTLINE.)

2. REGARDING THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE FIVE, THE GROUP
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AGREED THAT PRIOR TO THE START OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD THE FIVE'S ROLE SHOULD ESSENTIALLY BE AN EXTENSION OF OUR EFFORT TO REALIZE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL. THIS REQUIRES INFORMAL CONTACT WITH SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AHNTSAARI TO ENSURE THAT HIS REPORT IS TRUE TO THE PROPOSAL AND THAT HE IS NOT LEFT AT THE MERCY OF EITHER SOUTH AFRICA OR SWAPO -- BOTH OF WHOM WILL BE WORKING TO

MAKE UP FOR CONCESSIONS MADE IN THE PROPOSAL. AHTISAARI IS RECEPTIVE TO SUCH INFORMAL CONTACT IN NEW YORK. AMBASSADOR MCHENRY HAS MET WITH HIM ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS SINCE THE UN PLANNING BEGAN, AND AHTISAARI HAS REQUESTED A MEETING WITH THE CONTACT GROUP ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 3.

3. AHTISAARI IS SENSITIVE, HOWEVER, ABOUT ANY FORMAL LINKAGE OF THE FIVE WITH THIS PLANNING OR UPCOMING SURVEY MISSION. HE HAS OPPOSED ANY POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE FIVE ON THE SURVEY TEAM (MUCH TO THE ANNOYANCE OF THE GERMANS), AND THE OTHERS OF THE FIVE STRONGLY SUPPORT HIM ON THIS POINT. AHTISAARI'S DESIRE TO AVOID ANY FORMAL LINKAGE OF THE FIVE WITH HIS PLANNING HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONTACT GROUP'S UNANIMOUS CONCERN (DISCUSSED FURTHER BELOW) WITH THEIR CAPITALS' DESIRE TO PURSUE RAPIDLY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LIAISON OFFICES IN WINDHOEK. THE GROUP BELIEVES THAT THE PRESENCE OF SUCH OFFICES IN WINDHOEK, WHILE THE SURVEY MISSION IS THERE, MIGHT CREATE AN UNHELPFUL IMPRESSION OF INVOLVEMENT OF THE FIVE IN THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT. MOREOVER, THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF THE LEGAL BASIS FOR OUR PRESENCE IN NAMIBIA DURING THE TRANSITION. WE WOULD NOT WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE SOUTH AFRICAN LEGAL AUTHORITY.

4. IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD ITSELF THE CONTACT GROUP BELIEVES THAT THE ROLE OF THE FIVE SHOULD LESSEN, AS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OPERATION WILL THEN BE IN THE UN'S HANDS. THERE WILL CLEARLY BE A NEED TO KEEP PERIODIC TRACK OF THE UN, AND THE FIVE WILL NO DOUBT WANT TO BE ACCESSIBLE IN THE EVENT THAT TROUBLESHOOTING IS REQUIRED. HOWEVER, THE GROUP IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF FIVE LIAISON OFFICES IN WINDHOEK. THE CONCERN STEMS FROM A BELIEF THAT SUCH A PRESENCE WILL ENCOURAGE THE USE OF THE FIVE AS AN APPEAL BODY AND WILL THUS INHIBIT THE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL ENVISIONED IN THE PROPOSAL. IN ADDITION, THE GROUP BELIEVES THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LIAISON OFFICES WILL BE CONSIDERABLY EASIER THAN THEIR CLOSING AND SUSPECTS THAT THIS COULD BE PROBLEMATIC IF THERE WERE A DISRUPTION OF THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESS.

5. ON A SEPARATE TOPIC, THE CONTACT GROUP CONSIDERED THE ADVISABILITY OF APPROACHES TO SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO FOR THE PURPOSE OF: (A) URGING RESTRAINT IN BOTH WORDS AND ACTION (CONTINUED VIOLENCE IN THE CURRENT PERIOD PRIOR TO THE CEASEFIRE COULD UNDERMINE ALL THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED); AND (B) TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON A NUMBER OF POINTS MADE RECENTLY BY SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO. THE GROUP

BELIEVES THAT THERE IS A DANGER IN LETTING AN INACCURATE RECORD STAND UNCORRECTED. AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS PERHAPS A GREATER DANGER THAT IN SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT TEMPERS WILL BE RAISED RATHER THAN COOLED. THE GROUP THEREFORE IS INCLINED TO HOLD OFF ANY APPROACHES UNTIL WE SEE HOW THE NEXT FEW DAYS PROGRESS AND HOW AHTISAARI'S WORK PROCEEDS. THE EXTENT TO WHICH AHTISAARI CONFINES HIS PRESENT PLANNING PURELY TO THE MECHANICS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL (AS OPPOSED TO EXAMINING ANY SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AS THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND SWAPO SEEM TO WISH) MAY AFFECT THE NEED TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 aug 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USUNN03074
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780315-0628
Format: TEL
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808105/aaaadkbr.tel
Line Count: 128
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 982b0358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1554782
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA: CONTACT GROUP MEETING AUGUST 1
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/982b0358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014